

JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING  
BIOGRAPHIC/SITE REPORT AS OF 22 FEBRUARY 1994

===== BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION =====

REFNO: 1174-0-01 (ACCNO 6264)      Status: (A) DEAD BODY NOT RECOVERED  
Name: COTA, ERNEST KENO      Date Status assigned: 15 Oct 1974

Nationality	AMERICAN	Race	CAUCASIAN	Blood Chit	#
Service	NAVY	Sex	MALE	Blood type	A #
Grade	E5	Hair	BROWN	Complexion	#
SSAN		Eyes	HAZEL	Weapon	#
Serial No	DATA	Height	69 in / 1.75 mtrs	Weapon No	#
Birth date	23 Dec 1944	Weight	163 lb / 73.8 kg	Duty pos	SEAMAN
Home State	CALIFORNIA	Religion	PROTESTANT	PW Camp	\$

===== SITE INFORMATION =====

INCIDENT LOCATION (0)

Site Type: GROUND SITE  
UTM: 48PWS808151  
Lat/Long: 100515N / 1054415E  
Country: SOUTH VIETNAM  
Military Region: 4  
Mission Province: CAN THO  
(formerly):  
Mission District: CAN THO CITY  
Mission Date: 14 May 1968  
Mission Category: 3  
Local Analysis: Unknown location.

===== JTF-FA ACTIVITY SUMMARY =====

Folders Passed: Feb 94  
Vessey Case: NO  
Case type: GROUND SITE - INLAND WATER

===== VEHICLE DATA =====

Vehicle Type:	BOAT	Serial:	\$
Crash Type:	None	Engine Type:	
Call Sign:	HARNET COUNTY	1 Serial:	
Year:	\$	2 Serial:	

===== SPECIAL CHARACTER KEY =====

# = Item has been researched but data cannot be obtained.  
\$ = Item is not applicable to this case.  
@ or Blank = Data for item is unknown or not available.

CASE: 1174

=== CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS ===

22 March 1976

ON 14 MAY 68, EN2 ERNEST K. COTA WAS A CREW MEMBER ABOARD THE USS HARNETT COUNTY, ANCHORED ON THE BASSAC RIVER ABOUT TWO THOUSAND YARDS UP RIVER FROM THE NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY DETACHMENT AT BINH THUY, SOUTH VIETNAM. EN2 COTA LEFT THE SHIP FOR LIBERTY WITH TWO OTHER CREW MEMBERS AND WENT TO THE ENLISTED CLUB. SOMETIME LATER THE THREE CREW MEMBERS RETURNED IN AN INTOXICATED STATE TO THE BOAT LANDING AND CREATED A DISTURBANCE ABOUT RETURNING TO THE SHIP. THE O.I.C OF THE BASE CALLED THE COMMANDING OFFICER WHO DECIDED TO RETURN THE LIBERTY PARTY TO THE SHIP IN ONE OF THE BOATS AT THE LANDING AND NOT WAIT FOR THE SHIP'S LIBERTY BOAT TO RETURN.

EN2 COTA TAUNTED THE COL BY SAYING HE WAS GOING TO JUMP OVERBOARD. A SLIGHT SCUFFLE ENSUED, AND EN2 COTA FELL BACKWARDS INTO THE WATER IN THE VICINITY OF GRID COORDINATES WS 808 151. "MAN OVERBOARD" WAS CALLED AND A LIFE RING WAS THROWN OVERBOARD TOWARD EN2 COTA. SEVERAL MEN ON THE BOAT JUMPED INTO THE WATER IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESCUE HIM, BUT WERE EXHAUSTED WITHIN MINUTES IN THE SWIFT EBB CURRENT. EXTENSIVE SEARCHES WERE CONDUCTED TO RECOVER EN2 COTA, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. A DETERMINATION OF DEATH WAS RECEIVED ON 28 MAY 1968. (REF 1 & 2)

AN OVERWATER/AT-SEA CASUALTY RESOLUTION OPERATION WAS CONDUCTED DURING THE PERIOD OF JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1973 TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY/DESIRABILITY OF EXPANDING SUCH OPERATIONS TO BE USED IN CASES SUCH AS THIS. BASED ON THE COMBINED FACTORS OF COST AND LACK OF ANY POSITIVE RESULTS WHATSOEVER, THE AT-SEA OPERATIONS WERE TERMINATED. PUBCOM WAS DISTRIBUTED ALONG THE RIVER BANKS AND ON ISLANDS NEAR THE LOSS POINT, BUT NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR LEADS WERE DEVELOPED.

ON 15 OCTOBER 1974 THE ARMED SERVICES GRAVES REGISTRAITION OFFICE (ASGRO) BOARD OF REVIEW CONCURRED IN JCRC RECOMMENDATION THAT THE REMAINS OF EN2 COTA ARE NOT RECOVERABLE AT THIS TIME. SEARCH SHOULD BE REVERTED TO INACTIVE STATUS AND SEARCH OPERATIONS SHOULD BE DISCONTINUED. EN2 COTA IS CURRENTLY CARRIED IN THE STATUS OF DEAD, REMAINS NONRECOVERABLE. (REF 3)

=== REFERENCES ===

22 March 1976

REFERENCES: <1> RPT, CO, USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821), DATED 28 MAY 68. <2> LTR, JCRC-CDD-CR, DATED, 26 SEP 74. <3> LTR, MEMA-ASGRO, DATED, 30 OCT 74.

CASE: 1174

=== NEGOTIATION ACTIONS ===

17 February 1994

CASE NARRATIVE FOR CASE 1174-0-01 WAS PASSED TO OFFICIALS OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING THE 3 FEB 94 TECHNICAL MEETING.

JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING  
BIOGRAPHIC/SITE REPORT AS OF 11 APRIL 1994

===== BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION =====

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Service NAVY	Sex MALE	Blood type A #
Grade E5	Hair BROWN	Complexion #
SSAN DATA	Eyes HAZEL	Weapon #
Serial No 7731965	Height 69 in / 1.75 mtrs	Weapon No #
Birth date 23 Dec 1944	Weight 163 lb / 73.8 kg	Duty pos SEAMAN
Home State CALIFORNIA	Religion PROTESTANT	PW Camp \$

===== SITE INFORMATION =====

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(formerly):  
Mission District: CAN THO CITY  
Mission Date: 14 May 1968  
Mission Category: 3  
Local Analysis: Unknown location.

===== JTF-FA ACTIVITY SUMMARY =====

Folders Passed: Feb 94  
Investigations: Feb 94  
Surveys: Feb 94  
Vessey Case: NO  
Case type: GROUND SITE - INLAND WATER

===== VEHICLE DATA =====

Vehicle Type: BOAT	Serial: \$
Crash Type: None	Engine Type:
Call Sign: HARNET COUNTY	1 Serial:
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CASE: 1174

=== NEGOTIATION ACTIONS ===

17 February 1994

CASE NARRATIVE FOR CASE 1174-0-01 WAS PASSED TO OFFICIALS OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING THE 3 FEB 94 TECHNICAL MEETING.

=== JOINT INVESTIGATION, SURVEY OR EXCAVATION ===

6 April 1994

ON 13 MAR 94, IE3 INVESTIGATED CASE 1174 IN CAN THO CITY, CAN THO PROVINCE. THE VNOSMP WAS UNABLE TO LOCATE WITNESSES FOR THIS CASE. IE3 SURVEYED THE INCIDENT LOCATION BY BOAT, SEARCHED UP AND DOWNSTREAM ALONG THE RIVER BANKS, AND QUESTIONED LOCAL RESIDENTS, WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS. NO REMAINS, PERSONAL EFFECTS, MATERIAL EVIDENCE, OR BURIAL SITES WERE FOUND DURING THIS INVESTIGATION. (REF 4)



# JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING

BOX 64044

CAMP H. M. SMITH, HAWAII 96861-4044

CASE 1174-0-01

## NARRATIVE

ON 14 MAY 1968, PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS ERNEST K. COTA WAS A CREW MEMBER ABOARD THE USS HARNETT COUNTY ANCHORED ON THE SONG HAU GIANG APPROXIMATELY 1800 METERS UPRIVER FROM THE NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY DETACHMENT AT BINH THUY, CAN THO PROVINCE. DURING THE EVENING, PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS COTA LEFT THE SHIP WITH TWO OTHER CREW MEMBERS AND WENT ASHORE TO A CLUB. THE THREE CREW MEMBERS LATER RETURNED IN AN INTOXICATED STATE TO THE BOAT LANDING FOR RETURN TO THE SHIP. DURING A SCUFFLE AT THE BOAT LANDING, PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS COTA FELL INTO THE WATER IN THE VICINITY OF GRID COORDINATES WS808151, APPROXIMATELY 10 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF CAN THO, CAN THO PROVINCE. RESCUE EFFORTS WERE INITIATED IMMEDIATELY BUT PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS COTA WAS NOT LOCATED. EXTENSIVE SEARCHES WERE CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT AND THE NEXT DAY WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS.

## PERTINENT DATA ARE AS FOLLOWS:

NAME: COTA, ERNEST KENO

RANK: PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS, U.S. NAVY

DATE OF BIRTH: 23 DECEMBER 1944

RACE: CAUCASIAN

HEIGHT: 1.75 METERS

WEIGHT: 73.8 KILOGRAMS

HAIR: BROWN

EYES: HAZEL

PASSED TO OFFICIALS OF THE  
VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING  
THE 3 FEB 94 TECHNICAL MEETING

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# JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING

BOX 64044

CAMP H. M. SMITH, HAWAII 96861-4044

Vụ số 1174-0-01

## Tờ Tường Thuật

Vào ngày 14 tháng 5 năm 1968, Trung sĩ ERNEST K. COTA là thủy thủ trên chiếc thuyền USS HARNETT COUNTY đỗ trên sông Hậu Giang khoảng 1800 mét trên dòng cách căn cứ hậu cần Hải quân ở Bình Thủy, tỉnh Cần Thơ. Trong buổi tối, Trung sĩ COTA rời khỏi chiếc thuyền với hai người khác lên bờ để đi quán rượu. Sau đó ba người say trở về tới bến để về tàu. Trong lúc xô đẩy nhau, trung sĩ COTA ngã xuống sông ở gần tọa độ WS808151, khoảng 10 cây số phía tây bắc của Cần Thơ tỉnh Cần Thơ. Sự cố gắng tìm cứu đã được tiến hành ngay lập tức nhưng không tìm thấy trung sĩ COTA. Cuộc tìm kiếm kỹ càng tiến hành hết đêm và tới ngày hôm sau nhưng không có kết quả.

Sau đây là những chi tiết liên quan:

Họ và tên: COTA, ERNEST KENO

Cấp bậc: Trung sĩ, Hải Quân Mỹ

Ngày sinh: 23 tháng 12 năm 1944

Chủng tộc: Da trắng

Chiều cao: 1.75 mét

Cân nặng: 73.8 kí

Màu tóc: Nâu

Màu mắt: Lục nâu

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